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Editorial

MANY of the articles that we publish contain good suggestions for putting this or that right; and we receive many more that we are unable to publish. The Church, like the State, is not handicapped by a shortage of good ideas. For a suggestion to be practicable it is not enough that it should have to do with practical affairs; it must be shown to be capable of being put into practice by such and such persons, and not merely by the Church or the world at large.

The suggestion made by Mr Bowden for courses of theological instruction for lay people seems to us quite admirable. Possibly something of the sort will be proposed by the Commission on Evangelism, but that will not mean that it will be carried into effect. It offers scope for local initiative, which need not wait for the approval of the Church Assembly.

Dr Joad has recently expressed the opinion that "there is really not much point in being an agnostic nowadays: the Church of England has left us so little in which to disbelieve."[1] This is intended to be a clever gibe. It is in fact arrant nonsense; but it gains a certain plausibility from the confusion of very many members of the Church as to the meaning of the faith which they profess. If Dr Joad sought admission to membership in the Church, he would be expected to be able to say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and to answer the questions that are contained in the Catechism. If he attends public worship, he will find in the liturgy no lack of material for belief or disbelief. The Church of England has not abandoned its testimony to the Catholic and Apostolic faith. That many of the members of a Church should have a meagre understanding of the creed which they profess is no novelty; it is a chronic state of affairs which needs continual remedies.

But perhaps the plausibility of the gibe lies rather in the circumstance that the Church of England does not treat the body of doctrine to which it bears testimony as a closed system. It recognizes that further study and reflection may yield further light and that new discoveries may require modification of previously accepted theologies. It used to be a reproach of agnostics that the Church was too reluctant to admit that this was so. Agnostics may change their ground, but the Church will continue to maintain the testimony of its formularies, and at the same time it will, so far as is possible, refuse prematurely to close the discussion of new questions when they are raised. Such a refusal has no doubt the awkward consequence of temporary connivance at novel speculations, which will have eventually to be condemned, and of the

[1] *The New Statesman and Nation*, July 15, 1944.

toleration of ecclesiastical eccentricities, which a more rigorously authoritarian system would hasten to suppress. But this is a small price to pay for the maintenance of conditions in which truth can be candidly reckoned with, from whatever quarter it may come.

Even so, the maintenance of these conditions may be something of a luxury, that can be enjoyed only while a Church is comparatively secure. When it is seriously challenged by a hostile and aggressive creed it will have to close its ranks. It looks as though the Church of England is moving into such a situation, or rather waking up to the fact that it is already there. It is a moment when Pascal may have much to say to us, both in pointing us to the real nature of the Christian faith, and in warning us against attempts to enclose it in a system.

The Layman and Theology

A Practical Suggestion

It is generally agreed that this is a faithless and irreligious age. The point need not be laboured. The total ignorance displayed by the average man of the essentials of religion, his indifference to the Church and his misguided confidence in the self-appointed prophets of the day are generally admitted. The fact of this modern apostasy is well established; opinions differ as to its causes and the remedies for it.

The causes are no doubt many and varied. But when the bodies or individuals mainly responsible have been discovered and blamed, the situation will not have improved. The national game of "Hunt the Scapegoat" serves no really useful purpose, except that the discovery of a cause may suggest a remedy. So far this has not occurred to any marked extent. The drift from the Churches has accelerated rather than declined. The Bishop of Coventry has recently said that 80 per cent. of the population of that city has no connexion with any Christian place of worship. Experience as a chaplain in the R.A.F. would incline one to put the figure rather higher.

The important question is not how this drift has been caused but how it is to be arrested. It is evident that Recalls to Religion addressed to the nation at large must still go on, even though they have little noticeable effect. National Days of Prayer have their uses as well as their abuses. Of this 80 per cent., the majority no doubt share the national belief, vague as it is, in One Above who will see Fair Play and have some reverence for the Person of Christ even though they think His teaching impracticable; and their needs must be catered for. But to make any consolidated advance appeals need to be made to the faithful few. It is as true now as it was in the days of the Early Church that for the world to be attracted to Christ Christians need to be more truly Christian. It need hardly be said that this was the method of our Lord—*i.e.*, to sow the word broadcast wherever opportunity offered, but to concentrate on the thorough and intensive training of the few.

At present the instruction they receive is practically limited to the hearing of sermons. This might have borne fruit in the days of sixty-minute effusions from the pulpit. But what lasting lesson can anyone

take away from our brief ten-minute compounds of moral advice and exhortation which is all that modern taste can stomach? Three and a half years' experience in the R.A.F. has brought me into contact with only about half a dozen practising Christians who could be called well instructed, and three of those were candidates for the Ministry. If there are 20 per cent. of our countrymen who are connected with some place of Christian worship, then the percentage of those who have really understood and appropriated their religion must be minute. The trouble is that so many congregations, as Bishop Neville Talbot used to say, are like stagnant pools. The water of the Word flows into them from altar, lectern and pulpit, but it does not flow out of them and therefore it does not keep fresh. Of our 20 per cent. a good many are pietists whose grasp of religion is confined to a vision of individual salvation. They neither desire to pass the message on nor have any conception of the purpose of Christ for the world at large. Others, indeed, are missionary-minded, but how many are capable of setting forth their faith with sufficient clarity to make any impression on the restless and muddled minds of their contemporaries? The current and widespread misconceptions that they have to contend with include, for instance, the ideas that going to church does not help you to live a good life, that you ought to go only when you feel like it, that Christ is a legendary figure like King Arthur, that Christianity consists of doing no harm to your neighbours. How can our faithful few deal faithfully with these and similar errors without some more solid grounding in doctrine and theology?

It is true that the best advertisement for Christianity is a Christian life and that a Christian life is the product of the whole personality, not by any means mainly of the intellect; yet it is also true that if a man is to face and put to rout the multitude of our modern false prophets and the ideas that their uneducated followers confusedly reproduce, he must emphatically have reasons for the faith that is in him and be able to express them clearly. Surely, one cause of the spread of shallow and half-baked ideas masquerading as philosophies of life is the lack of any clear theological knowledge among the faithful with which to combat and confute them.

From the number of possible examples we may choose the modern beliefs about sin, which, derived from popular second-rate books and periodicals, have a considerable influence on people's actual conduct. According to this undefined but widely accepted doctrine, the Church's emphasis on sin is barbarous and obsolete, meditation on the subject is morbid and unhealthy, and the modern man should not bother about his sins; indeed, the word 'sin' has no real meaning, since it denotes merely moral disease, for which we are not responsible; it is due entirely to heredity and environment and may easily be corrected by proper education and psychological treatment, with the result that the human race will surge onwards with increasing joy and velocity on its automatic progress towards those barely hidden goals of Peace, Prosperity and Happiness that it is the destiny of Evolution to attain. Now it goes without saying that this doctrine is unrealistic, untrue and suicidal, and the teaching of it thoroughly pernicious. But to show up

its folly and inconsistency some grasp of theology is needed; and it is extremely doubtful whether many of our boasted 20 per cent. know enough theology to be able to state even the central importance of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

This criticism is not made in any spirit of superiority. If the writer may be pardoned a personal reminiscence, it was when acting as a lay missionary in India that he sent home a Christmas card with a sentimental rhyme about "Christ, half human, half divine." When suitably admonished by its recipient for heresy, he could not understand what the fuss was about or why the orthodox statement of our Lord's Person made such a tremendous difference. It was not until residence at a theological college gave opportunity for study that he realized the depth and importance of the point at issue. Many of the keenest followers of Christ do not really know whom they are following. The experience of preparing candidates for Confirmation in the R.A.F. has strengthened the conclusion that 90 per cent. at least even of those keen enough to take this step have never grasped the practical difference between regarding Christ as a great prophet and regarding Him as the Son of God. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that pseudo-religious ideas should continue to flourish when the light of true Christian knowledge is so appallingly dim.

Faith may be an admirable shield, but to wield the sword of the Spirit we must understand something about the Spirit; and that inevitably involves theology. The time is past when we could take refuge in our citadel of faith and rest content with defensive tactics. We must be prepared to take the offensive. But to do that with any hope of success the few remaining members of our garrison must be drilled and armed and know how to use their weapons. Otherwise under the banner of that sentimental tolerance miscalled Charity they will sally forth only to be inextricably mingled with the motley crowd of our besiegers. Fr Bede Frost's book *Some Modern Substitutes for Christianity* is a welcome example of that kind of intolerant charity with which we must face both the atheistic ideologies and the insidious heresies that are so popular at present. The Early Church knew the poisonous power of heresy and was on her guard against it; we have allowed it nearly to undermine the walls of the citadel. Heresy hunting may be a bad thing when carried to extremes, but we have swung to the opposite extreme of so tolerating heresy that we do not recognize it when we see it. In fact it may be, and is, safely preached from the pulpit nowadays without a single protest from a congregation too blind to perceive it.

Our contention is, therefore, that something is wanted akin to the Roman Catholic Leadership Courses which have now been running for some time in the R.A.F., whereby selected men are withdrawn for a week or a fortnight and given special training both in their faith and in the application of it to the world. If they are thought to need it, how much more do Anglicans,[1] whose only training in the faith is commonly a Confirmation course of some ten to twelve hours of

[1] Similar courses have now been started for Anglicans in the R.A.F.

instruction! This is fairly inadequate at whatever age it takes place: if it was taken at the age of 12 to 14 the memory of it is usually so vague as to be almost entirely useless. What is wanted is a kind of Post-Confirmation or Refresher Course in Theology for those lay people whose faith is real and yet not sufficiently lucid to pierce the fog of false ideas wherein their neighbours are aimlessly wandering.

Now, given the theoretical necessity for the training of the laity in theology, how would it work out in practice? In the first place there would be no need for a special "Theological College for Lay Folk" with endowments, special staff and all the rest of it. It is not to be expected either that they will come forward in great numbers or that they will be able to keep extended or definite terms. The only time that the few who desire it will be able to spare is in their holidays, so that courses will mostly have to be limited to one-, two-, or three-week periods in holiday surroundings. Such a period, it is agreed, will be far too short, but at least even a week contrasts favourably with the ten hours normally allotted to Confirmation preparation; and it might well serve as an introduction and incentive to further private study and reading. As for the holiday surroundings, the Church owns a great number of hotels by the seaside and in the country in the shape of unwieldy rectories and vicarages, with resident managers presumably qualified for this kind of work, which could be adapted for the accommodation of small parties. It has been suggested elsewhere that some of them could be made into Christian Youth Hostels with advantage. Here is another possible use for them; there is something to be said for removing the millstones from our necks and turning them into foundations for a useful building.

The course would be definitely not a retreat, though it would take place within the framework of the offices, attendance at which would be optional. Instruction on prayer would be included, for many practising Christians commonly find their devotional exercises laborious and uninspiring. But the main emphasis would be on solid theological teaching. What is envisaged is a short holiday at a kind of Little Gidding with the emphasis on instruction rather than devotion. The main difficulty would be to decide what to leave out of the program; so much cries for admission: a rough sketch of O.T. history to form a background and give meaning to Bible reading, lectures on the Beatitudes to drive home the difference between the Christian and the respectable life, a brief explanation of N.T. criticism to establish the historicity of the Founder, some time at least given to Church history and its relevance to the present day, with a glance at the development of the Ecumenical Church, and above all a study of the Person and meaning of our Lord together with a survey of the ancient heresies which are still so much alive to-day.

The easiest way to put such a plan into practice would probably be by dioceses. In every diocese there are plenty of large rectories in small parishes where a suitable man could be installed to run such a course in addition to undertaking the duties of the parish. The expenses of board and lodging need not be more than those of a normal inexpensive holiday. The only "overhead costs" would be those incidental to

turning the house into something resembling a small private hotel, and diocesan funds might spare a few pounds for that. They could be advertised in the ordinary way, but each applicant might be required to produce a certificate from his parish priest to ensure that he was a bona-fide student and not merely someone seeking a holiday on the cheap; and provision could be made without much difficulty for accommodating families. The actual details of working out how much time should be allotted for work—lectures, essays, reading, discussion groups—and how much to holiday could be decided by mutual arrangement, as in any Reading Party. And that is in effect what the thing would be—a Christian Reading Party, a new way of making a holiday holy but not pietistic. It could apply to all sorts of people, older boys and girls on school holidays, university students in the vacations, family parties throughout the summer. Who knows but what a churchwarden in the future may not have to produce a certificate or diploma from one of these Little Giddings in order to win or retain his high office? No one should leave them without understanding a little more clearly what a Christian is and why he is one, and what a Churchman is and why he is one, and without being both more eager and more equipped to spread the Gospel he has made his own, to apply it to modern conditions of living and to puncture those nebulous phantasms of unhistorical, conceited, muddled thinking that pass muster as imitation religions to-day.

GUY BOWDEN.

R.A.F.

Pascal and the New Theology

A NEW book has just appeared. It is *The Clue to Pascal*, by Emile Cailliet (S.C.M. Press, 6s.). The author has left Rome for Evangelical Protestantism. He is therefore well qualified to understand his subject. The many pages of notes show how laborious the examination has been. An account, at once copious and interesting, is here given of Pascal's life and thought, in all its aspects. The clue to Pascal, which the author justly boasts of having found, is Pascal's attempt to create a biblical theology. That did not of course mean to Pascal what it did to Chillingworth—the Bible and the Bible only. For him it meant the Bible as interpreted by popes, councils, and fathers. And even Chillingworth did not altogether escape the influence of the Prayer Book and other interpretations of Scripture. M. Cailliet and his assistant translator, the Rev. T. C. Hume, are to be congratulated on having produced an idiomatic and readable piece of English, which preserves much of the famous clarity one naturally expects of a French writer.

"A book," says M. Cailliet, "should be, not a grave, but a cradle." We have been stirred by this delicious phrase, and intend to fulfil its spirit by going on to consider another side of Pascal's thought. But we can do so only after we have warmly commended M. Cailliet's work to the readers of THEOLOGY. What follows was prepared independently of M. Cailliet's book.

"Because of his unique combination and balance of qualities," says T. S. Eliot, "I know of no religious writer more pertinent to our time." That made us read Pascal again. And in reading the *Pensées* we came across quite a number of conceptions that are generally regarded as having been invented and patented by the "neo-orthodox" school. We hope we are not just like a clucking hen cackling over a mare's nest. But we are going to try to arrange or summarize a little of the *Pensées* under headings suggested by neo-orthodox thought. To some the parallels may be a little surprising. Doubtless they are in part the fruit of Pascal's Augustinianism. Once more we find it was the Frenchman who got there first, though it took a German to make a system of it.

The result is little more than a mosaic of quotations. (We are ourselves guilty of the translation.) But it may have its uses. For Barth, especially in his earlier works, is obscure. And Niebuhr and Forsyth, though more within our horizon, may also cause doubts in us. Undoubtedly it is grand stuff. But isn't a lot of it too subtle to put into the broad poster-technique required for preaching—in spite of its claim to be a Theology for the Preacher? And then is it possible to fit it in with Catholic doctrine concerning such things as Natural Law and Grace and the Church? So it may be useful to see similar thoughts, couched in less specialized terms by a thinker more alive to the Vincentian canon.

As everyone knows, the *Pensées* are the notes Pascal made when he was preparing a work in defence of the Christian religion. The statement is likely to be received with derisive hoots by all the Barthians present. "Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis," they will cry. But no! For the *Pensées* are nearly as far from ordinary apologetics as Barth's Gifford Lectures are from fulfilling the terms of the Gifford bequest, which required that they shall deal with Natural Religion in the widest sense of the term. Barth, however, in his subtle straightforward manner, explained his conviction that the very existence of natural religion is due to a fundamental error, that his relationship to it could only be one of attack, that it was his duty to put things in terms of dogma and revelation; and, very rightly, the trustees agreed. As we shall see, Pascal has a very similar attitude, and perhaps we shall find his explanation easier to accept and more convincing.

If the reader manages to get past the first section, where litterateurs browse and quote and chew the cud and fail to seize the point, he will find in the second the "Misery of man without God," or, in other words, how nature is corrupt—in other words, Original Sin. As Barth uses Nietzsche, or Niebuhr Marx, so Pascal uses that still deeper sceptic Montaigne. He describes the search for diversion and amusement (which God and the saints, being happy, do not need), the vanity that enters into even the most apparently selfless quest for knowledge, the attempt humanity makes to cure its ills by not thinking of them, the inconclusiveness of progress ("All that perfects itself by progress perishes also by progress").

Witness 451 (Brunschvicg's text): "All men naturally hate one another. Concupiscence has been harnessed as well as possible to make it serve the public good. But it is only a pretence and a false image of

charity: for it is nothing but hatred at bottom"; or 453: "Admirable regulations of police, morality, justice, have been founded on or drawn from concupiscence, but at bottom man's ugly underworld (ce vilain fond de l'homme), this figmentum malum, is only covered over, it is not removed." Sublimation is no escape, for in this world concupiscence reigns in things of the flesh, curiosity in the spiritual, pride in the moral. That exactly corresponds to Niebuhr's "Balances of power," but a tiny touch of Transatlantic naivety has prevented him from expressing it with quite as unbounded a cynicism.

So man, in that fallen greatness that only serves to intensify his misery, man, that thinking reed imprisoned between the two infinities of greatness (seen through the astronomer's telescope) and of smallness (seen through the microscope), can find no way out save through God. But when he looks for God, God is hidden. Natural religion cannot reveal Him. For that Revelation, Inspiration, Grace are necessary.

242: ". . . I wonder to see the assurance with which these people undertake to speak of God. When they are addressing their remarks to the irreligious, their first chapter is a proof of God's existence by the works of nature. I should not be surprised at such an attempt on their part when addressing their remarks to the faithful, for it is certain that those who have a living faith within their hearts will instantaneously see that there is nothing in existence that is not the work of the God they adore. But in dealing with those in whom this light has been quenched, and in whom one aims at rekindling it, people that is who possess neither faith nor grace, who when with all the light they have they search all they see in nature which can lead them to that knowledge, and find only dimness and darkness; to tell them that they have only to look at the least of the things about them to see God revealed, and to give them as a full proof of this great and important matter the course of the moon or planets, and to claim to have given a complete proof by such a statement, why that is just to give them reason to believe that the arguments for our religion are feeble indeed, and I see by reason and experience that nothing is more calculated to make them conceive a contempt for it.

"Not so does Scripture, which knows better the things of God, speak of it. It says that God is on the contrary a hidden God; that since nature became corrupted He has left them in a state of blindness from which they cannot emerge save through Jesus Christ, apart from whom all communication with God has been removed: Nemo novit Patrem nisi Filius, et cui voluerit Filius revelare (Mat. xi, 27). This is what Scripture indicates to us, when it says in so many places that those who seek for God find Him. It is never said that those who search for light at noonday or for water in the sea will find it; it must well be that the evidence for God in nature is not like that. So it tells us elsewhere: Vere tu es Deus absconditus (Is. xlv, 15). . . ."

243: "It is a remarkable thing that no canonical writer ever made use of nature to prove God. . . ."

244: "What! Don't you even admit that the sky and the birds prove God? No! And doesn't your religion say so? No! For while

that is true in a sense for some souls to which God gives that light, none the less it is false with regard to the majority."

Barth has something very similar, though it takes the form of saying that God did not reveal Himself to the lily in the dale, nor yet to the giant-snake. So also has Vogel in *The Iron Ration of a Christian.* It is about time we got over the sort of thing that was said by the Bishop who confirmed Arnold Lunn: "You will meet men who do not believe in God. As I was coming over the hill I heard a bird sing. Tell them that!" and the natural conclusion on the hearer's part: "If that was all that was to be said for Christianity, I determined to know what could be said for Atheism."

But Pascal does not reject the assistance of the lower levels; by themselves they are of no final value, but they may be stairs by which we can climb.

245: "There are three means of believing: reason, habit, inspiration. The Christian Religion, which is the only reasonable one, does not acknowledge as its true children those who believe without inspiration; this is not that it excludes reason or habit—quite the reverse; so one must open one's mind to proofs, and confirm oneself by habit, while offering oneself by acts of self-humiliation to those inspirations which alone can bring about the true and saving effect: Ne evacueretur crux Christi (1 Cor. i, 17)." And to give natural religion (if it claims to stand alone) the quietus, not to speak of administering the knock-out to Jeans and his fans:

556: "When a man is persuaded that the relations between numbers are immaterial eternal truths depending on a first truth in which they subsist, which is called God, I won't consider him much advanced as regards salvation." So 523: "All faith consists in Jesus Christ and Adam, and all morality in concupiscence and grace." For (470): "There is an invincible opposition between God and us, and without a Mediator there can be no relation between us." 527: "The knowledge of God without that of one's misery makes for pride. The knowledge of one's misery without that of God makes for despair. The knowledge of Jesus Christ makes the mean, because in Him we find both God and our misery." So Pascal's view of Christianity is Redemptive, Cross-centred, mediatorial. God is known only through the Mediator. All forms of mysticism that claim direct experience of God are excluded. Pascal would agree with Kierkegaard's statement that only an idol can be directly experienced. 582: "Truth itself is made into an idol: for truth apart from charity is not God, but is His image and an idol, which one ought not to love nor worship at all, still less ought one to love or worship His opposite which is falsehood."

We have quoted most of what Pascal says on this subject, because it helps us to see what is meant, or at any rate what ought to be meant, by the Barthian denial of natural religion.

Pascal is capable of a rich dialectic. The apophthegmatic form of the *Pensées* lends itself to it. Perhaps it was just as well that they remained unfinished, and that this dialectic was not ironed out into a smoother, more logical argument like that of the *Lettres Provinciales.*

Section 862 is a statement of the dialectical nature of Christianity.

We can quote only a part of it. "The faith embraces a number of truths which seem to contradict one another. A time to laugh, to weep, etc. Answer, answer not, etc. (a fool according to his folly). Their source is the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ. So also the two worlds. The creation of a new heaven and new earth; a new life, a new death; everything duplicated, and the same names persisting. Finally the two men that are in the just; for they are the two worlds, and members and images of Jesus Christ. So all the names befit them, just, sinners, dead, alive, alive, dead; elect, reprobate.

"There are therefore a great number of truths both of faith and morals, which seem inconsistent, and all of which subsist in a wonderful order. The source of all heresies is the exclusion of some of these truths; and the source of all the objections the heretics make to us is the ignorance of some of these truths."

Again, the relativity of all partial truth is dealt with in section 385, under the heading "Pyrrhonism," so called after the first great Greek agnostic. "Everything here is partly true, partly false. Absolute truth is not so; it is pure and true all through. This mixture dishonours and annuls it. Nothing is perfectly true: and so nothing is true, if one means true without contamination. It may be said to be true that homicide is bad; yes, for we recognize readily what is bad and false. But what can be said to be good? Chastity? I say no, for then the world would come to an end. Marriage? No: continence has a higher value. Not to kill? No, for then there would be hideous disorders and the wicked would kill all the good men. To kill? No, for that destroys nature. We have neither truth nor goodness save in part, and blended with evil and falsehood."

There are, says Pascal, two kinds of men—just men who believe themselves to be sinners, and sinners who believe themselves to be just. The feelings of the newly absolved should be a mixture of joy and fear. Christianity exalts men without making them vain, and humbles them without rendering them abject, but does neither of these unless it does both. He finds a certain dialectic even in Scripture, though rather verbal conceptions of inspiration made his application less fruitful than it might have been, and made him escape from contradiction by recourse to figure and allegory. In Jesus Christ all such contradictions are reconciled.

The Divine Incognito is not such a new idea, as we see from 751: "What do the prophets say of Jesus Christ? That He will be unmistakably God? No! Rather that he is a God who is truly hidden; that He will go unrecognized; that He will not be thought to be Him at all; that He will be a stone of stumbling, against which some will dash, etc. . . ."

Pascal was no "Ecclesiastical Perfectionist." Niebuhr would almost be satisfied by his insistence on the peccability of the Church. The Church's rôle, like John the Baptist's, is a preparatory one. "The Church teaches and God inspires, both infallibly. The operation of the Church serves to prepare for grace or condemnation, what she does is enough to condemn, not to inspire." But the infallibility spoken of belongs to the Church as a whole, and is hidden like God behind

nature. Conscience by itself is no sure guide. "Never does one do evil as abundantly or as joyously as when one does it by conscience." The Devil interfered with the zeal of the Jews before Christ's coming, because at that time it had a saving effect, but he has changed his policy since and encouraged their zeal!

Pascal, however, would not accept Niebuhr's denial of "Efficient Grace" (whatever exactly he means by it). For Pascal grace is efficacious; the word was the very slogan of the Jansenists. But not a grace contrary to nature: "Law has not destroyed, but instructed nature: grace has not destroyed law, but made it effective." But it would require another essay to gather all the wise and profound things Pascal says about the Church.

Was Pascal a Barthian? Certainly not! His teaching was Catholic and Augustinian, with certain special features relevant to his day, and hardly less relevant in our own day. Barth would say "No!" Yet we suspect that, for Anglicans at least, Pascal is the safer guide.

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What is Real Life?

Since 1937, when Buber's *I and Thou* first appeared in English, there has been to my knowledge no adequate discussion of his thought. There has, indeed, been a growing interest in what he has to say, but it has taken the form of paraphrase without criticism or of appropriation without comment of some of his ideas and phrases. He has been used in a secondary or ulterior way. For instance, in a book like Farmer's *Servant of the Word* the situation of the preacher facing his congregation has been clarified by means of the now familiar terminology of the world of "Thou" and the world of "It." But this is not to say that Professor Farmer has even begun to assess the proper value of Buber's work. The same may be said of the increasing number of allusions in slighter theological essays. Buber's work has been found useful and illuminating for an understanding of such various matters as the decay of community life, the rank growth of State power, the meaning of marriage, the inadequacy of an economic interpretation of society, and so on. But hitherto there has been no radical attempt to see the implications or the possibilities of Buber's thought within the whole situation of the various theological and philosophical traditions.

Fr Jarrett-Kerr is to be congratulated on his attempt to face the major issues of *I and Thou*.[1] If the remark does not seem pretentious by contrast with his witty and scholarly criticism, I should say that at last Buber's work is being taken seriously. There is an interesting gallimaufry of allusion in Fr Jarrett-Kerr's essay, where the names of Maritain and Berdyaev, St Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth—key-names for the present theological situation—meet and mingle.

[1] In his essay "Real Life is Being" in Theology of July, 1944.

But this is no more than the tiniest of beginnings; and I can add very little to this beginning, in the hope that others may take up the discussion. Is it too much to hope that someone versed in Thomistic teaching and also aware of the profound significance of the philosophico-religious tradition in which Buber stands (a tradition reaching back to Kierkegaard on the one hand and on the other to the elaborate teachings of the Jewish mystics) may go on to establish a new and fuller learning?

(1) Fr Jarrett-Kerr asks: How can we talk at all about Buber's "moment of meeting" or about the relation of the "I" to "Thou" or in brief about this whole world of "Thou"? For on Buber's own analysis all talk in the third person is mere objectification and not the living actuality. Buber says, "God may properly only be addressed, not expressed." Then either the proper end of this theology is silence or Buber is involved in a logical contradiction which makes his whole position defective. For are we not bound all the time to "express" God in theology? And similarly on the level of human relations do we not constantly express truth about other persons by using the accusative and not the vocative?

Of course this is so. But the logical contradiction is not radical. For is not this precisely the "exalted melancholy of our fate" that we cannot remain within the world of "Thou," in the burning moment of pure relation with God? All third-personal talk about God is a makeshift. But when it is talk of a certain kind and in a certain specific form it does have its place. It is here that the concept of theology as "dialectical" comes to life.

Dialectical theology springs out of the dialectical situation of living: daily life is characterized by the intermingled use of the vocative and the accusative cases, and the linguistic necessity corresponds to the actuality of our human situation. Theology, therefore, is not reduced to silence, but to dialectic—that is, to the saying of apparently contradictory things, to indirect statement, to dramatic presentation, to the use of dialogue and of irony. Statement of the direct and simple truth is not possible—"directness," says Kierkegaard in a notable phrase, "is paganism"; paraphrasing Augustine's discussion of the nature of the Trinity we may say that theology speaks not for the sake of speaking but lest we should be silent altogether. In this connexion Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is the *locus classicus* for the elaboration of the necessity of indirectness in theology.

(2) Flowing from this situation which forces upon us dialectical, refracted thinking it seems that we may justly hold that there is no ultimate distinction between language and reality. Because he assumes that there is this ultimate distinction Fr Jarrett-Kerr says, "If we start from language by language we must abide." I should rather say that on the contrary language when it means anything at all rises out of being. "In the beginning was the Word." In Hamann's phrase, speech, language, is "the key that unlocks all mysteries." Fr Jarrett-Kerr's position would seem to lead not to a salutary silence but to mere scepticism. Of course he does not in fact take refuge in scepticism; but the argument he uses against Buber is equally able to demolish his

own position. But while Buber recognizes the "twofoldness" of his material and allows his thought to be shaped by that, Fr Jarrett-Kerr leaves us with nothing but a certain vague reliance on a Thomistic doctrine of being.

(3) But at this point, too, he fails, it seems to me, to make good his case. What von Hügel calls the "is-ness" of God could not be apprehended at all, or, if somehow apprehended, then never stated, if we must "abide by language." But this "is-ness" is surely never an isolated apprehension of the inquiring intellect but arises for creatures out of the self-giving of God in His Word. In brief, not being but relation is the beginning for us. God's pure being is always pure *act;* not the main piece in an intellectual jig-saw puzzle, not the king to be checkmated by laborious attack; but He Himself makes the attack; and if He is not there at the beginning and all the way through then He is not there at the end. But in fact He is with us continually in His Word, as the outcoming fructifying Maker of relation with His creation.

It seems to me that the doctrine of the Word, of the living Incarnation of Being, is illumined rather than obscured by Buber's insistence on the living relation between *I* and *Thou*. Certainly Fr Jarrett-Kerr's suggested "voluntarism" does not help us very much; and even Aquinas, for all his exactitude and awe-inspiring majesty of schematization, does not seem to have the incarnate Word as the central and controlling fact of his thought. Yet what else has Christianity, after all, to give but the incarnate Lord? The Word made flesh is still all there is worth talking about in Christian history. And this Word not only illumines but also determines the very lines of our thought about Himself. We have no other standard and no other equipment for this occasion than that which is provided from God in the actual giving of the relation.

The elucidation of a hierarchic order, of nature and supernature, reason and faith, however pleasing to the intelligence and satisfactory to the general trend of philosophic inquiry as it has developed both before Christian history and parallel to and mixed up with it, seems to be defective at this point, that it does not rely for its method on the only source of method as well as of material, on the given Word of God. The incarnate Word becomes, on the Thomist view, merely an idea built into a cunning tesselation of human experience; whereas in a theology of the Word the Word Himself remains His own Master: we do not know God except through His Word; every knowledge we have of God is therefore framed and mediated in the relation which He Himself establishes for us. And if it be objected that we cannot know that the relation conveys the truth about God and that we are therefore left without actual knowledge of God Himself in His pure being, then nothing can be answered except that here precisely is the situation in which faith is paramount and *sui generis* and by no means to be confused with or supplanted by discursive acquaintance with the subject. There is nothing else for it but to hold the faith in the living Word's truth. "God is always the Subject"; we cannot subdue Him to our systems; and He comes to us in the trembling elusive guise of the mediating Word.

(4) Again, Fr Jarrett-Kerr objects that on Buber's thought the reliance on the "I-Thou" world as real leads either to a "Manichæan dismissal of the 'I-It' world" or to a pantheistic transformation of it into the "Thou"-world. I wonder if this difficulty has ever been overcome even on the Thomist interpretation? There are only the two alternatives, one veering to what looks like pantheism (as with Buber), the other edging the "It"-world out of the realm of reality. In his exhaustive examination of *The Conception of God in the Philosophy of Aquinas* R. L. Patterson points out that Aquinas is not finally able to assure reality to the ordinary world. Under the pressure of his concept of God's completing grace Aquinas does not maintain the hierarchic order to the full, but the world of things slides away into the realm of appearances.[1] Now I do not intend this or any of my remarks as a counter-thrust in defence of Buber's position; but in order to show that the philosophical difficulties of the alternative to Buber's way are at least as great.

(5) But on other grounds I should say that Buber's thought has tremendous claims to our attention. It is not original in its essence nor a mere faddist restatement in novel terminology; but it moves within the broad and sure lines of religious history. The last objection raised by Fr Jarrett-Kerr with which I shall deal brings out very well what I should call the "humanity" of Buber's thought. He objects that there cannot be any guarantee that the relation "I-Thou" exists at all. Words cannot catch it, and it remains for ever elusive, changing even on Buber's own admission from a bright rainbow sketching to a dull handful of dust.

Now what is the point of this? Admittedly there is no guarantee, no proof. Yet if you begin with yourself (as Descartes did) you can never really get beyond yourself; you are stuck in the mud of solipsism. And if you begin with God's pure being you can never reach yourself or the world, which remain at the very least slightly infected with unreality. But if you begin, as Buber does, with the relation, with God speaking to you, God sustaining His creation, then you move all the time within the relation and finally in the relation you come to dwell. Nothing can be proved in this; the most that can be done is that the relation may be *confirmed* in action. Meaning and value stream from the life which is bound up in relation with God—through worship, through prayer, through the multitudinous ways offered to us in a world which is the packed treasure-house of God's invitations and splendours.

In the end life cannot be proved or argued about but only lived; and in the living of it words pass to and fro as the binding, sustaining, creating power, themselves given meaning and life from the Word of words.

Ronald Gregor Smith, C.F.

[1] I speak, unfortunately, only from a general recollection of Dr Patterson's work; but the point remains apposite.

CORRESPONDENCE

"OUR STRUGGLE"

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

SIR,

The opening article in the July number of THEOLOGY by Mr Bennett and your comments on it deal with issues of the first importance, and you deserve much gratitude for having brought them to the fore.

No question could be more crucial than what Christianity really signifies, and with what Mr Bennett says about the present confusion on this subject and its dangerous consequences I am in full agreement. But while he rightly urges that it is most necessary that the whole issue in its full scope should be clarified, his own formulation of the problem is not without risk of increasing the confusion.

Your own comments, with which I am in complete accord, imply a more fundamental divergence, as it seems to me, than might be inferred from your initial statement that you are unable to contradict Mr Bennett's premisses or to dispute his conclusions. Since much is at stake, your line of criticism needs to be pressed farther.

While the article says many true and important things, it has the fundamental defect of discussing the issues as though they arose only on one single plane. The Gospel and "British Christianity" are said to be two irreconcilables between which the battle must sooner or later be openly joined. But it makes a world of difference whether, when people talk about British Christianity or a Christian civilization or the principles of Christianity (all of which phrases are used in the article in a disparaging sense), the questions they have in mind are those of theology or of politics. What Mr Bennett describes as "British Christianity" may be a mistaken and jejune expression of Christianity, but it may at the same time represent, in terms of a not too happy phraseology, a sound and desirable conception of political purposes.

Karl Barth would be the last person to look with a lenient eye on the British Christianity delineated in the article. Yet he asserts as unequivocally as does the Archbishop of Canterbury that the political order has a place in God's design for man, and a service to render to God, *distinct from* the place and the service of the Church. M. Jacques Maritain has pressed home the distinction with characteristic French lucidity and force. One of the great debts which we owe to Baron von Hügel is for his insistence on the separateness and autonomy of other spheres and levels of life than the specifically religious. Yet all this seems to have had little decisive effect on thinking in this country. The distinction between the different spheres is continually blurred.

Since I want this letter to be provocative, I will say that in my, admittedly limited, experience I have found it extraordinarily difficult to get a group of clergy to discuss a political question in political terms. Religion is the parson's business, and it is his temptation to bring it in everywhere. It is, or ought to be, the presupposition of everything that we think or do. But social or political questions can surely be discussed

without explicit reference to it, just as mathematical, engineering or technical economic questions can be so discussed. Can we not consider what is politically wise, just or expedient without claiming that any particular solution or method is specifically Christian?

Mr Bennett protests against the "wide-spread purloining of the title of Christian." I agree about the misuse of the term. But among the chief offenders are Christian conferences and ecclesiastical pronouncements that insist on affixing the label "Christian" to secular programs that express the common mind of the great majority of men of goodwill.

A certain amount of confusion between the two spheres among those who are unversed in theology need not surprise us. If those who want a political order that is tolerant, that acknowledges certain basic human rights and that aims at social justice, attach to these political aims and virtues the adjective "Christian," because they know that their own desire for these things is rooted in their Christian loyalty, there is room for instruction in the discriminating use of terms, but no great cause for concern, so long as what is under discussion relates to the social and political sphere.

Mr Bennett is afraid that "British Christianity" is likely to be made a "national religion" and that the Church will be compelled to choose between becoming its organ or being thrown out. But why need we assume that that is going to happen in this country? The true defence against a political religion is to distinguish clearly between the spheres of religion and politics. Surely the right strategy, if we are to avoid the dangers which Mr Bennett fears, is to develop and teach a sound doctrine of the State and of society in their proper concern with the affairs of man's temporal life.

I am convinced that the only way of escape from the confusion and dangers to which his article calls attention is through the introduction of a middle term which is at present largely lacking. What we urgently need is a *social and political philosophy* to oppose the totalitarian tendencies of our time. It is equally mistaken, and may be equally disastrous, to be indifferent to the necessity of such a doctrine and to suppose or claim that it must be in any full sense Christian. The real source of many of our difficulties is the absence of a social and political philosophy which, while avowedly secular, is at least not incompatible with the Christian understanding of the ends of man's earthly life and which is open to progressive impregnation and leavening with Christian insights and values. Without such a social and political philosophy, there can be no real solution of the religious problem of national education. If this middle term is wanting, there is no bridge between the Christian teaching given in our schools and the conscious and unconscious assumptions of the society from which the pupils come or in which they have to live and work.

The gist of the matter lies in the insistence in your own comments that there are *two* tasks which have to be pursued simultaneously. Beyond all question there is need to address ourselves with greater intensity to the task of the Gospel and the Church. I have every sympathy with Mr Bennett's aim to build up a body of Christians well

grounded in a true understanding of the faith, provided that the very real dangers besetting such a policy (against which you wisely warn us) are avoided. But there are also the quite distinct tasks of the social and political order, the purpose of which is (in the words of Barth) "to secure that the will of God is done in the life of mankind as a whole—outside as well as within the sphere of faith." The concrete decisions which have to be made in this field are in the main the responsibility of Christian individuals and groups acting, as M. Maritain says, "on their own initiative and at their own risk," *without committing the Church as such*. What we need to-day is a much clearer and ampler recognition by the institutional Church of the autonomy of the secular sphere—autonomy in respect of the Church as ecclesiastical institution but not in respect of God and His revealed will.

Nothing that I have written is even remotely a plea that the secular life should be left to pursue its own course, untroubled by the Christian challenge and unleavened by the Christian faith. Apart from that faith I see no hope for the future of secular society. My reason for writing is that, until we have got rid of certain confusions, we are seriously hindered from getting down to our proper job.

Yours very sincerely,

CHIPSTEAD.
July 4, 1944.

J. H. OLDHAM.

SIR,

Mr Bennett's article on "Our Struggle" makes abundantly clear certain of the issues which confront the Church in our time, and you, in your comment, offer some valuable observations—in particular, that we must not let go of that which will have to be opposed. May I be allowed to elaborate that point a little?

You say, very rightly, that "the danger in future may not be that the Church will be too national, but that it will not be national enough." It is, in fact, already largely introverted, and there is a danger lest we look forward to the expected persecution like rabbits fascinated by a snake. Persecution and the struggle of the kind which Mr Bennett has in mind should, if and when they come, overtake the Church "as a thief in the night," because the Church, conscious and sure of the ever-present Christ in her Sacraments and in the lives of her members, is still busy, although she may have paid some heed to such matters, with her age-long task of lifting up Christ in order that He may draw all men to Himself.

What is certainly true is that it is not likely that the Church will be able, in her corporate capacity, to bring any great influence to bear on the social issues of the day. These will mostly be developed under "post-Christian" influence. (But a post-Christian influence is not necessarily an anti-Christian influence. The post-Christian influences which are shaping themselves may challenge the Church to show just how much she does really believe in the Sacred Humanity of Jesus; to that extent they will be the Word of God to His Church for that time.)

That is not to say that the Church will be powerless or will have no work to do beyond holding together as a small band of wayfarers

overtaken by a blizzard. The work will be there to be done, work appropriate to the particular historic situation in which the Church finds herself. The Spirit, who guides us into all truth, will show us His truth for that situation as well as for all others. But we can only expect Him to do this if we are willing for Him to lead us in *this* situation.

And in this situation, the situation of the Church of 1944, there is abundant proof that "all is not yet in the hands of Giant Despair." (Anyone, for instance, who has had the privilege of hearing Bishop Philip Strong speak about the Church in New Guinea will realize that Screwtape and the Gates of Hell have got a job on their hands if they are hoping to prevail against a Church like that.) It will be in the hands of Giant Despair if we go about fearing the worst, or even if we regard the existing parochial system as being in some manner of divine origin and therefore unalterable, and if we refuse to adapt our Church life to the new social patterns which are developing. But evidence is already accumulating that even in such tentative and isolated efforts as have already been made to use these new patterns, Christ is still at work in His Church (to say nothing of the constant rewards of the ordinary parochial ministry).

This is written very obviously from the parish priest's point of view. It takes no account of the need for constant theological reformation and restatement, which is part of the price of being a living Church. It takes no account either of the particular difficulties of the Christian layman to which you, Sir, rightly draw our attention. The point I would wish to make, while agreeing wholeheartedly with much that Mr Bennett says, is that we shall be best equipped to face our struggle of to-morrow, in whatever form it may come, if we are throwing ourselves with good heart into our "struggle" of to-day, finding perhaps, and to our utter amazement, that our struggle may by God's grace turn out to be our victory. The situation which confronts the Church is hazardous enough in all conscience. Even so, when we reflect on what the Church is in the mind of God, we might dare to greet the unseen with a cheer.

Yours, etc.,
R. C. Thompson.

Christ Church Vicarage,
Liverpool, 17.
July 9, 1944.

BOOK REVIEWS

Religion in Soviet Russia, 1917-1942. By N. S. Timasheff. With a preface by M. F. X. Millar, S.J. Sheed and Ward. 6s.

People, Church and State in Modern Russia. By Paul B. Anderson. S.C.M. Press. 6s.

Mr Timasheff's book was written in March, 1942, Mr Anderson's in September, 1943. Both emanate from America. Both are carefully documented and indexed. Each betrays the fact that the author has been at great pains to achieve objectivity. Mr Timasheff is the better writer. But Mr Anderson shows a far more sympathetic understanding

of his subject. Together, the two books provide an excellent chronicle of the changing fortunes of Russian Christians under the changing policies by which the Communist state has adapted to changing circumstances its unbending hostility to all religion. Mr Timasheff is more concerned to note the changes of policy which the persistence of religion has forced upon the Communists, Mr Anderson the adaptation which the Christians, and the Patriarchal Church in particular, have been constrained to make to the resolute restriction of their activity to the conduct of worship and the administration of the sacraments.

The great fault of Mr Timasheff's book is his resolute refusal to admit the continuity of his period with all previous Russian history, or the reality of the inner changes undergone by people, Church (which he quaintly calls the *Greek* Orthodox Church) and State during the period. For him, the story is very simple. In 1917, in a moment of frenzy, the Russian people admitted to power a gang of wicked men. That gang is still firmly in the saddle, having learned nothing and forgotten nothing in its rough ride, and till it is unseated the people, and the Church with them, must suffer the penalty of their weakness. Once the gang is gone, all will be as it was before. In a footnote to p. 18 Mr Timasheff explicitly dismisses what he calls the "more sophisticated" explanations of the Russian puzzle of Berdyaev (and others), which "see in the anti-religious fanaticism of Communism a kind of metamorphosis of the rooted piety of the Russian national spirit," with the question-begging statement that "this point of view would compel us to think of the victory of Communism as a *straight* continuation of Russian history. . . ."

Mr Anderson's weakness is a different one. He evidently feels, though he does not always yield to, the common Anglo-Saxon temptation to assume that all foreigners, queer though their goings-on may be at times, are at bottom decent, sensible chaps, with much the same scale of values as ourselves. He writes, for example (p. 147): "We desire to establish unity and co-operation between countries like [*sic*] the Soviet Union, Britain, China and the United States, and between the adherents of Christian and of non-Christian philosophies in those countries."

"Fortunately," he goes on, "we have some generally accepted principles on which we are united. They may not satisfy each individual, but the Atlantic Charter and the 'Four Freedoms' (freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, freedom from fear) constitute definitive objectives of a high order. They have been accepted by the Soviet Union. The Soviet people are fighting for them. In fact, the Soviet people might well say that the points in the Atlantic Charter and in the Four Freedoms really belonged to them before they were caught up by the West, for they are quite largely covered in the Soviet Constitution." Mr Anderson then goes on to quote Articles 118-125 of the Constitution, and continues: "There is, of course, no complete coincidence, but there is evident similarity in objective between these paragraphs and the Four Freedoms, Atlantic Charter, Beveridge Plan, the findings of the National Resources Planning Board in the U.S.A., etc."

There is, indeed. There is likely to be, in the platforms and slogans offered to countries of roughly similar economic and political development at the same moment, when, moreover, they are in military alliance. But the question is, how far do these platforms and slogans mean the same thing to the statesmen, and to the voters, of the different countries where they are uttered and current?

Two documents, quoted in part by both our authors, go some way to show what freedom of worship (and speech), at any rate, means to the hierarchy of the Patriarchal Church, the only section of it which has been allowed any means of expression at all. The first is the so-called Solovetsk Document of 1926, a memorandum said to have been prepared for presentation to the Government by the bishops confined in the concentration camp on Solovki Island in the White Sea (on which Professor Tchernavin's *I Speak for the Silent* may be consulted). Mr Timasheff's reference is on p. 157 (not, as stated in his index, 151), Mr Anderson's, much longer, on p. 71. I quote the former. (Neither names his source: the translations employed by Mr Anderson, in what is presumably official Soviet English, are often all but incomprehensible.) "The Church," states the document, "wants religion to flourish. Communism wants it to perish. With such a deep chasm in fundamental principles separating the Church and the State, it becomes impossible that the inner harmonies of reconciliation should obtain. There can be no reconciliation between assertion and negation, between Yes and No. For the very soul of the Church, the reason of its being, is just what is categorically denied by Communism."

According to Mr Timasheff (n. 14, p. 163), who refers to Miliukoff, *Outlines of Russian Culture*, Part I, pp. 192-5, this message was directed against the late Patriarch Sergius "who looked for a compromise with the Communist Government."

Yet this same document, which Mr Anderson quotes as giving "the attitude of the group of churchmen who in 1927 achieved registration of the Patriarchal Church administration," in the person of this same Sergius, then Metropolitan of Nijni-Novgorod and vice-Locum Tenens, continues, in his version: "A conflict . . . can be avoided only by the strict carrying out of the law regarding the separation of the Church from the State. According to this law the Church must in no wise mix itself in the activity of the civil Government, which has to take care of the material welfare of the people. Neither must the State hinder the Church in its religious and moral activity. . . . Our Lord Jesus Christ has ordered us to give unto Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, *i.e.*, the material welfare of the people is the realm of the Government. He left no commandments to His followers to seek to alter the forms of government or to guide its activity. According to the teaching and traditions of the Orthodox Church it has always stood aloof from politics, and has remained obedient to the State in all that did not concern its faith. That is the reason why it was able to remain loyal to the civil Government both in former Turkey and in the ancient Roman Empire, even when it was quite alien to the Government spiritually. A contemporary State can demand no more of it. . . . As things stand at present the Church only desires a systematic and complete carrying

out in actual life of the law which separated the Church from the State."

The second document is the message of the Patriarch to all the parishes in the Union on the day of German invasion, quoted by Mr Timasheff on p. 136 and by Mr Anderson on p. 23. I follow the latter. "Our Orthodox Church," wrote the Patriarch, "has always shared the fate of the people. [Mr Timasheff renders "nation."] Together with the people she has borne their suffering and been comforted by their victories. She will not leave the people even now. She blesses with heavenly blessing even the present effort of all the people . . . [This sentence is missing in Timasheff, or his source, the *New York Times*.] The Church of Christ blesses all Orthodox for the defence of the sacred frontiers of our homeland."

These two declarations, of 1926 and 1941, mark the two moments of the tragic position of the Russian Church, torn between its mission to witness to the everlasting gospel, challenged by an anti-Church, which forbids religious propaganda and imposes anti-religious propaganda through the schools and the League of Militant Godless, and its pastoral duty to the people, who are at once the bearers of the gospel and the makers and subjects of the Government that denies it—for churchmen may perish in bearing their witness, but the Church can bear its witness only if it survives, whatever its misery and humiliation may be. The West may like to forget it, but it is a dilemma which the Church in the West has had to face before now, and which parts of it are facing anew to-day. It behoves us, who are not facing it yet in all its anguish, to be very slow to judge before we condemn a Church which submits to confine its proclamation of the gospel to the Eucharist.

Magdalen College, Oxford. P. J. Thompson.

The Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to the Revelation. By H. H. Rowley. Lutterworth Press. 8s. 6d.

A lecturer who has been invited to deliver a course of four lectures, in which he is to give a general survey of some specified portion of the field of biblical study and to report on all recent work therein, and has been warned that his audience will include some who have no previous knowledge of his subject and some who are already acquainted with most of the standard works about it and are chiefly anxious to be told the very latest things that have been said, may well have misgivings. If he tries, as he must, to cater for all his audience, he cannot escape the feeling that at certain points in his lectures some of his hearers will be thinking—"Yes, yes, we know all that"; and, at other points, other hearers will be thinking—"Why do you make things unnecessarily difficult by expounding theories which you then proceed to demolish, and by dragging in hosts of foreign authorities to support positions already firmly established?"

Possibly thoughts of this kind were in the minds of some of those who listened to Professor Rowley's four lectures on Jewish and Christian

Apocalypses during the Vacation Term for Biblical Study at Oxford in 1942. For the lectures, now printed under the rather cryptic title "The Relevance of Apocalyptic," provide exactly what is asked for by those who arrange the programs of these annual Vacation Terms. The intelligent beginner would not find them too difficult; the advanced student could not complain that any recent contribution to the subject, large or small, wise or otherwise, has received no mention. Lecture I deals with the rise of Jewish apocalyptic literature; lecture II contains brief descriptions of apocalyptic books dating from the last two centuries B.C. (Daniel, 1 Enoch, Jubilees, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Sibylline Oracles, Psalms of Solomon, "A Zadokite Work"); lecture III contains similar descriptions of works of the first century A.D. (Assumption of Moses, 2 Enoch, Life of Adam and Eve, 4 Esdras, Apocalypse of Baruch, Ascension of Isaiah, Apocalypse of Abraham, Testament of Abraham, the Little Apocalypse in the Gospels, the Book of Revelation); lecture IV is entitled "The enduring message of apocalyptic." Six appendices contain discussions of the date of the earliest sections of 1 Enoch, the date of Jubilees, the figure of Taxo in the Assumption of Moses, the unity of 4 Esdras and 2 Baruch, the duration of Antichrist's reign in the Ascension of Isaiah, the source and unity of the Little Apocalypse in the Gospels; footnotes of varying length appear on one hundred and twelve of the one hundred and fifty-eight pages occupied by the main text; there are sixteen pages of bibliography and eight pages of index. The index is admirable; the bibliography would probably be much more useful to the ordinary reader if it were confined to major works of first-rate importance.

Professor Rowley has done what he set out to do. He has compressed a large amount of information into a small space without losing the thread of his argument and without misrepresenting views which he rejects. He has shown that, though even the apocalyptic writers themselves had only a secondary interest in the details of the fantastic pictures which they drew, the things they really cared about are things that still matter.

A few passages need revision; misprints on pp. 16, 36, 115; a wrong reference on p. 74 (ix, 10 for ix, 12); "shown" (p. 44) should probably be "suggested"; "it is to the apocalyptists that we owe our hope of the Hereafter" (p. 163) is not quite the whole truth; "there fell from Him all the spiritual essence of the hope of the apocalyptists" (p. 168) might be misunderstood.

F. S. Marsh.

Selwyn College,
Cambridge.

Isaac Barrow, His Life and Times. By Percy H. Osmond. S.P.C.K. 12s. 6d.

It is most surprising that Isaac Barrow, Regius Professor of Greek, Lucasian professor of mathematics, Newton's teacher, and Master of the greatest college in either of the ancient universities, brilliant preacher and generally regarded as the best scholar of his day, should hitherto have lacked a full-dress biography; and it is hardly creditable

on the part of performers in any of the spheres which he adorned, or of Trinity, who owes so much to him, that he should have been thus neglected. We therefore are deeply indebted to Mr Osmond for this handsome volume and for a picture in the round of one of the most interesting figures of the seventeenth century in England.

We do not place Barrow as high as his contemporaries and immediate successors did, and indeed he was not a Newton or a Bentley; while as preacher, though John Locke pronounced his moral discourses to be masterpieces of their kind, he cannot, nor can the utterance of any pulpit orator of our country, bear comparison with the *éloquence de la chaire* across the Channel. Still he is a great personage and well worthy of the enthusiasm with which his present biographer sings his praise.

I think that Mr Osmond devotes rather too much space to his preaching—50 out of his 226 pages, *i.e.* a quarter of the whole book. But that is because taste has changed. The age of Barrow was greedy of sermons (Mr Osmond remarks it), and significant is the fact that for pious Christians of the seventeenth century the Faithful Shepherd (*cf.* Richard Bernard's volume of that title, first published in 1607) was first and foremost the expounder of Holy Writ. But even they found Barrow long-winded, and it is doubtful whether the copious extracts supplied by Mr Osmond in chapter VII will draw many readers to the Sermons (Vol. II of Barrow's collected works).

In contrast with the space assigned to this aspect of Barrow's genius is the really inadequate account of his Mastership of Trinity (chapter VIII). Here his times should have had fuller attention. So also with the subject of the Cambridge Platonists, who get a bare page from Mr Osmond, and that in face of a challenging remark by Principal Tulloch, who denied the influence which they are supposed to have exercised on Barrow.

The author expresses a just surprise that Barrow, finding himself in Paris at the time when the Provincial Letters were taking the town by storm, makes no mention of Pascal, especially as "the anonymity of those letters was not a very close secret." But, we may ask, was it not? Pascal and his friends did not care to divulge it, and their foes were singularly unsuccessful in their endeavour to learn what they would have given their ears to know. A propos of Pascal, it might have been worth while to record how near he came, by determining the area of the cycloid, to the discovery of the calculus. And while we are in France a word of special praise is due to Mr Osmond for his judicious treatment of Descartes. But he should not have slipped into vulgar error, "of that ilk" (p. 27), and slang, "Varsity church" (p. 170). Slight misprints occur on pp. 109, 126, 163, 224. In other respects the style is pleasant and the book is beautifully presented.

Trinity College,
Cambridge.

H. F. Stewart.

SHORTER NOTICES

THE CATHOLIC DOCTOR. By A. Bonnar, O.F.M. Burns Oates and Washbourne. 7s. 6d.

This book is intended to provide the Roman Catholic doctor with a rational and authoritative presentation of his ethical system sufficiently comprehensive to solve the moral problems which he will meet in practice. This purpose has been achieved in a competent and readable manner. The chapter on Euthanasia and Sterilisation (Chapter X) departs from the general plan of the book, being a polemic against these two practices, not always in the best of taste and not bearing the imprint of close reasoning and sympathetic understanding of the problems involved which is characteristic of the rest of the book. The discussion of the "Safe Period" is inadequate and misleading to lay readers, the inadequacy of the practice in the face of definite medical contra-indications to pregnancy not being mentioned and no distinction being drawn between hypothetical dates and those which are generally accepted as the ones to be followed. In the otherwise admirable brief treatment of psychotherapy and allied subjects it is surprising to find that the sex instruction of the adolescent should be deferred until he is over 14 or 15.

The Anglican doctor will find much that is interesting and instructive in the book; it will serve him in many of his own problems and will help him to understand those of his Roman Catholic colleagues.

JOHN SHEPHEARD.

LIVERPOOL.

THE SEVEN LOCKS. By Hanbury Pawle. C.B.E., D.L. Published by the author. 2s. 6d.

When Samson's seven locks were cut off his strength went. When Britain loses faith in Divine Guidance, the Empire will be lost. Samson (*i.e.*, the Empire) slept with Delilah (*i.e.*, pleasure) from 1919 to 1940, till Dunkirk woke him up. How can a third world war be prevented? Clean up politics. Revive religious faith. The Church must make an authoritative call. The Book of Common Prayer must be scrapped. A new form of worship must be made ("What a task . . . what a responsibility . . . what a thrill!"). The clergy must be better leaders: and then "we will stride out into the glorious golden future."

Brigadier Pawle has sat up "night after night endeavouring to crystallize his ideas." He expects many of the clergy to reject them with indignation, and to resent his interference. There is nothing either to reject or to resent, because despite his endeavours nothing has yet crystallized. But I hesitate to advise Brigadier Pawle to spend any more time on this work of his. I don't intend to.

H. C. L. HEYWOOD.

CAMBRIDGE.

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